THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) During the period from November, 1997 to March, 1998, the prices of crude oil and petroleum products in the international market declined. However, the declining trend changed towards end March 1998 and oil prices rose in April, 1998.

(b) The required information is given in Annexure. [See Appendix 184 Annexure No. 28].

(c) Prices of oil in the international market are highly volatile and are subject to wide fluctuations and any movement in the international prices is bound to have an impact on our import cost. It is, therefore, difficult to predict the savings expected in future imports.

Price Hike of LPG and Allied Products

992. SHRI SHIV CHARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to hike prices of LPG and allied products to the tune of 33 per cent; and

(b) if so, the need and justification thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) The Government had decided in November, 1997 that subsidy on LPG will be reduced in phases to reach the level of 15% of the import parity price by 2000-01. The subsidy will be transferred to the fiscal budget from the year 2002 onwards.

Complaints against Dealer and Officials of IOC and HPC in West Bengal

993. SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY:
SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the complaints against the dealers/oil company officials of Indian Oil Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation by the LPG consumers in West Bengal as ventilated in local newspaper Ananda Bazar Patrika dated 19th November, 1997 and 5th December, 1997;

(b) whether the grievance redressal system has become totally non-functional forcing consumers to approach newspapers with their complaints;

(c) if not, the action taken so far by the Companies against the errant dealers and the officials based on the above complaints; and

(d) the action taken by the Oil Companies to strengthen their grievance redressal system?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (d) Yes Sir, IOCL and HPCL are aware of the complaints published in the Local Newspapers by LPG consumers including Ananda Bazar Patrika dated 19.11.97 and 5.12.97. Inspections are carried out by the officers of Customer Service Cells of IOCL and HPCL. Appropriate penal action is taken against the erring distributors under the Marketing Discipline Guidelines, which includes warning letters, fines and suspension and termination. Necessary action has been taken on all complaints received from consumers in West Bengal. Recently the Marketing Discipline Guidelines have been revised in May, 1998 and made very